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Environmental causes of reading problems and suggested programs which principals can implement are presented. Parental attitudes and behavior, the absence of books in the homes, lack of language stimulation, nonstandard dialect, and inadequate experience opportunities are among the environmental causes mentioned. Preprimary diagnosis, experience-enrichment opportunities, family counseling and group discussions, nongraded classes, individualized instruction, and programed tutoring are suggested to overcome these environmental deficiencies. Case histories of programs in action are cited. Interaction of community, home, and school is emphasized. A step-by-step approach to change, initiated by the school principal and mutually worked out by all concerned, should include (1) identification of neighborhood factors interfering with reading performance, (2) assessment of resources, (3) establishment of specific objectives, (4) clarification of procedures, and (5) evaluation. Charts, tables, and a bibliography are included. (RT)

Final Report, Interpretive Manuscript #1

March, 1969

"Reading Problems and the Environment--The Principal's Role"

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Foreword

Many people have to make decisions about changing school programs. Before a program can be changed, and in order for it to be successful, parents, teachers, and school administrators must be committed to an idea or a program.

One of the areas now undergoing rapid change is the treatment of reading disability. This book is one in a series of four concerned with reading difficulties and making adjustments in school programs to solve reading problems. People in our schools must face the question of what they can do about reading difficulty. Each of the four books in this series directs its message to a specific person in a school staff. Each focuses on a different aspect of treating reading difficulty and what different staff members can do to make that treatment more effective. The four target audiences are: the teacher and the treatment of reading difficulty in the classroom; the reading specialist and the treatment of reading difficulty within a school building; the principal and the treatment of reading difficulty related to environmental factors; and the top-level administrator and the treatment of reading difficulty through a multiservice diagnostic center.

It would be unwise for anyone to read only one of the four monographs and feel that he had acquired a complete picture of what schools can do to overcome reading difficulty. Each of the monographs is a part of the broad picture; all four parts should be read in order to visualize the scope of the treatment of reading difficulties at various levels. Naturally, the classroom teacher will attempt to deal with minor disabilities, whereas the diagnostic service center will focus on the types of more severe reading disability. It is possible, of course, for an individual to read only that monograph which is directed to him personally and to learn what research indicates about activities in his area. He can find descriptions explaining the establishment of programs that will enable him to overcome certain types of reading disability. As long as he understands that he is concerned with only a limited segment of the total picture, he will have some perspective in his efforts to make change within his area of responsibility and influence.

The U. S. Office of Education contributed to the support of the preparation of these monographs because it believes that the technical research information compiled by researchers and reported in research journals should be interpreted in a readable presentation to those who conceive programs and effect changes in school systems. The plan of the monographs, therefore, is to summarize research findings related to a given topic and a given audience, to describe programs that are new and apparently successful within the limits of the topic, and to make recommendations for setting up these new programs. Furthermore, the intent of the monographs is to cut down on the time lag between research demonstration of worthwhile projects and the implementation of these projects in school systems. Naturally the dissemination of information is necessary before change can take place. It must be noted however that knowledge of successful treatment of reading disability is only the initial step in bringing about change.

An individual person with a strong idea and a strong commitment to the improvement of the instructional program and the services offered by the school is required in order to accomplish change. Someone must be convinced that there are better ways of doing things and be willing to expend extra effort and time in order to bring about more effective teaching programs.

The overall strategy of these books embodies reading difficulties that range from slight to traumatic dimensions. Treatment, therefore, must move on many fronts with various professionals working simultaneously. Thus the ideal is to provide action by teachers, supervisors, and administrators. If for some reason or other, all of these persons do not act on the problem in their respective spheres of influence, an individual is not prevented from mapping plans appropriate to his responsibility and initiating action at that level. The anticipation of such a situation was the motive in directing each of the four documents toward a different person. Thus an interested party is enabled to set up a program in his own area, regardless of what happens on other fronts.

Each book contains:

a) interpretation of research as related to a set of causes

b) model programs aimed at overcoming the causes

c) steps for setting up a program (directed to specific leaders in the school system)

d) recommendations and guidelines for those programs

The preparation of each manuscript was preceded by a review of research over the past ten years. Visits to two dozen operating research projects also backed up the descriptions of model programs.

The purpose of this book is to give school principals some ideas about environmental causes of reading problems and to suggest adjustments in their schools to meet the problems. Environmental research is discussed, but more important, successful programs are described and guidelines are given to aid an administrator in selecting ideas for changing his own school. By adapting these ideas and practices to his environment and population, the principal may make a significant contribution to the reading skill and to the happiness of the children in his school.

Definition of Terms

A number of terms will be used throughout these publications in reference to the roles of various people involved in the teaching of reading. The following definitions of roles should serve as a guide to the particular duties of each. These definitions, and analyses of qualifications for each of the roles, were developed by the International Reading Association: Professional Standards and Ethics Committee, and are taken from the Journal of Reading for October, 1968.

A reading specialist is that person (1) who works directly or indirectly with those pupils who have either failed to benefit from regular classroom instruction in reading or those pupils who could benefit from advanced training in reading skills and/or 2) who works with teachers, administrators, and other professionals to improve and coordinate the total reading program of the school.

A special teacher of reading has major responsibility for remedial and corrective and/or developmental reading instruction.

A reading clinician provides diagnosis, remediation, or the planning of remediation for the more complex and severe reading disability cases.

A reading consultant works directly with teachers, administrators, and other professionals within a school to develop and implement the reading program under the direction of a supervisor with special training in reading.

A reading supervisor (coordinator) provides leadership in all phases of the reading program in a school system.

Developmental reading instruction is characterized by starting at the instructional level of a child, helping him proceed at his own rate, and following a sequential series of reading activities. This kind of instruction is done in the classroom by the classroom teacher.

Remedial reading instruction includes the characteristics of developmental instruction but deals with children who read at two or more years below their capacity or grade level. This kind of instruction is given by a remedial reading teacher outside of regular classroom settings, usually in a clinic or special classroom.

Corrective reading instruction, like remedial instruction, includes the characteristics of developmental instruction. It deals with children who read up to two years below capacity or grade level and is given by the classroom teacher in the regular classroom.

INTRODUCTION

John Steinbeck has said, "Learning to read is the most difficult and revolutionary thing that happens to the human brain."

Despite the difficulty of the task, most adults who went through the public school system twenty or twenty-five years ago did learn to read. They are baffled by today's news that a large proportion of children are not learning to read at all or acquiring only limited ability in reading.

The reasons for today's failures are many: more children in school, larger classrooms, more complex psychological problems, more distractions, less compulsion to learn, not enough money to provide the personnel, space, and materials to cope with all the other problems. Furthermore, when recalling the good old days, it is easy to forget that those who could not learn quietly dropped out of school, taking their problems and failures off the record.

The truth is that, until fairly recently, not a great deal was known about reading problems, why some children learn and others do not, what kind of training to give to those who teach reading, what materials best facilitate learning to read, what separate skills combine to turn an illiterate child into a discriminating reader. In the past two or three decades various disciplines have discovered more about this basic skill than was known previously. In the past few years, with the infusion of funds to support experimentation and innovation, more new approaches have been tried than ever before.

In an effort to make educators aware of what has been discovered and what is working elsewhere, these monographs have been prepared. The last two in this series--the third one, directed toward the reading specialist, and the final one, directed toward the classroom teacher--concentrate on what can be done within a single school to deal with the student who is having difficulty learning to read.

Cooperation Needed

No one person can solve all the reading problems in a school district; nor can any one type of activity satisfy all needs. Every school system has reading difficulties that vary from slight misunderstandings of rules to severe disabilities with accompanying psychological and social deviations. A comprehensive reading program, therefore, includes the diagnosis and treatment of reading problems at all levels, slight to severe—a program that ranges from correction by a classroom teacher to treatment by a clinician. Without that range of treatment some children are bound to suffer serious defeat in learning to read.

The classroom teacher, the reading specialist and the administrator all provide necessary ingredients in a workable, comprehensive reading program. When one or more fails to contribute the part his role provides, he destroys a significant part of the program. The classroom teacher provides the diagnostic and corrective bases. He must identify problems and determine to apply corrective treatment in the classroom or refer the child to someone who can give the needed treatment. If the classroom teacher sees that the child needs additional diagnosis or treatment on an individual basis, he sends the child to a remedial reading teacher (reading specialist).

The reading specialist works with individuals or with small groups and provides specific and concentrated treatment as long as the child needs the help. Estimates place 10%-25% of the school population in need of that kind of specific help in reading (Strang, 1968). The specialist and the classroom teacher remain in constant touch about the individual child so they can work cooperatively in bringing him to satisfactory performance in reading. Often a specialist will work only in one school building or share his time between two buildings.

It has been found that when the remedial reading teacher (a reading specialist) divides his time among four or more schools, he does not have enough time or opportunity to keep in touch with the classroom teacher about the progress of students he is working with in his remedial classes. Thus, the classroom teacher cannot reinforce the activity that goes on in the remedial class--he may even counteract it--and the remedial teacher does not get feedback from the classroom teacher about important things like interests and attitudes observed while the remedial treatment is going on.

Should the remedial reading teacher who works within a school building find that working with reading skills and providing extra practice on an individual basis does not bring satisfactory results, he must refer the child to more specialized diagnosis. This kind of diagnosis usually takes place at a reading clinic or a learning disabilities clinic.

It is estimated that 1%-5% of the school population need highly technical diagnosis and treatment for severe reading disabilities that may have their roots in emotional, social, or physical problems. This kind of clinical diagnosis and treatment needs the support of the central school administration. Funds, communications, support, and encouragement for a comprehension program must come from the top-level administrator. Unless the top-level administrator, the principal, the reading specialist and the classroom teachers see reading problems from various levels and work with one another in referrals, treatments and evaluations, every child with a reading problem will not get the help he needs.

It should be evident, therefore, that a comprehensive attack on reading problems comes about through the cooperation of many people. Certainly it is possible for the classroom teacher to do a quick diagnosis of reading problems and engage in corrective activities in her classroom without having additional services available within a school or school district. But, there will normally be several children in every classroom who need attention beyond what the classroom teacher can provide. Those services outside the classroom must be provided in a cooperative manner among the classroom teacher, the principal, the reading specialist and the central administration. Even within the classroom the teacher will need financial support in order to have sufficient materials for the carrying on of a variety of diagnostic and corrective activities. This support evidently must come from school finances. Often the need for corrective activities is not easily detectible to the outsider, hence cooperative action becomes of even greater importance.

CHAPTER I READING AND THE HOME ENVIRONMENT--The Principal's Responsibility

An Overview

Everyone agrees that the ability to read is the key to educational success. It is safe to say that the greatest amount of time, effort, money, and talent on the part of educators is being spent on finding a breakthrough in the language arts. That so many still fail to read adequately cannot be attributed to lack of trying on the part of the schools.

The full extent of the problem is not known even today. What evidence there is, however, seems to indicate that reading disability affects a surprisingly large proportion of the school population. This conclusion was arrived at through various research efforts.

- Recent achievement tests given to New York City's 84,000 third graders show that 59.9 per cent are reading below grade level. The Board of Education has termed reading deficiency the schools' "overriding problem."
- The ubiquitousness of remedial reading programs in every community across the nation indicates that reading deficiencies exist among the rich and elite as well as the poor and disadvantaged.
- A study of 50,000 eighth-graders showed only 14 per cent with eighth-grade reading ability. Eight per cent read at the fifth-grade level, and seven per cent at the twelfth-grade level. The remainder was distributed between the two extremes. The range is typical and creates an enormous problem for teacher and student alike (Lazar, 1952; DeBoer article, p. 274). The relatively simple question of what level text materials to provide for such a range becomes nearly insoluble.

- Recent studies reveal that the number of boys who read either poorly or not at all exceeds that for girls, probably ten to one, but no teacher or textbook publisher has figured out a way to act on this information (DeBoer, 1958).
- Even though the problem is known to be extensive, it is possible to find school administrators who confess to no knowledge of its extent in their buildings or school systems.

Environment and the Principal

Just as there is mounting public concern today over the number of students who fail to learn to read adequately--estimates range to more than 50 per cent in some places--so there is growing recognition that the schools must take the lead in overcoming the most pervasive causes of the difficulty, that is, environmental factors (DeBoer, 1958, p. 276). Attention is focused both on specific techniques within the school designed to overcome environmental drawbacks and on programs that reach out beyond the school walls to involve the parents and neighborhood in the learning process. The prime mover behind all these programs has been, and must be, the school principal. He is in the best position to understand and evaluate the needs of his particular community, and even more important, he is in the best position to initiate change.

It is only too true that many principals do not actually know their community nor the various avenues of approach to such community groups as settlement houses, PTA's, church organizations, ad hoc committees on housing, sanitation, or police protection. Unfortunately not all principals have become free enough of administrative tasks to evaluate fully the quality, individualized effort, or effectiveness of the reading instruction in their schools. However, there are principals who have found sufficient promise in programs and techniques aimed at overcoming environmental factors to suggest that the coming decade will be one of the most significant in the attack on this aspect of reading problems.

Factors other than environmental, of course, play a role in the problem of reading difficulties. Poor vision, bad hearing, limited I.Q. and other deficiencies contribute, as well as inadequate instruction. But none is as pervasive in its relation to reading problems and none is so frequently intermingled with other factors, or becomes the underlying cause, as home environment.

Recognizing the Disadvantaged Reader

The general characteristics of the disadvantaged reader, so often identified with the disadvantaged child, are rather well known (Gordon). The child is likely to have a lack of language skills, meaning not only a limited vocabulary, but a lack of words that may extend to a lack of the very thought processes that lie behind language (Ausubel, 1964). He may have difficulty in handling abstract symbols, in maintaining thought sequences verbally, in interpreting what he experiences, and in communicating what he feels (Deutsch, 1964). In addition, he is likely to have any or a combination of visual and auditory difficulties (Deutsch, 1965), a restricted attention span, little motivation to learn, a low self-image. His initial difficulty in learning to talk "properly" has made it harder for him to learn to read, and, consequently, harder for him to learn to think. With such strikes against him, he falls further and further behind as he continues through school. If school teaches him anything, it is what failure means.

(As always, however, it is somewhat dangerous to generalize. Some of the same symptoms, the courses of which are altogether different, are encountered in reading problems.)

Home and Family Influence

What are the factors in the home that are most often related to reading problems rooted in the environment? A low socioeconomic level is one, although parental attitudes and behavior may be more significant than the parents' education, income, or race (Dave, 1963). The size of the family, the child's position in it, and the opportunity the home presents for learning experiences relevant to school are also important (Gordon, 1965 article). The usual picture is of a large, impoverished family, usually mother-dominated (Gill and Spilka, 1965), living in a noisy, overcrowded atmosphere that is often permeated with an underlying panic (Deutsch, 1963). The basic necessities are uncertain, adults unpredictable (Maas, 1951), and the world suspect and threatening. Communication is often through gesture and other nonverbal means (Milner, 1951), while the language used is terse, not necessarily grammatical, and limited in form. The home has few books, few toys, and little self-instructional material. The children rarely venture beyond their own neighborhood or even their own block. They are rarely read to, and there is little contact between parent and child. Rewards and punishment (often physical) are immediate (Kohn, 1959; Leshan, 1952). Learning to postpone gratification is as irrelevant to their way of thinking as learning for learning's sake (Gordon, 1964).

In such a noisy and chaotic environment, children learn to adapt as best they can. They may learn, for instance, to screen out sounds, sometimes only too well. Their habits of listening and hearing, and their speech patterns and pronunciation may prove inappropriate to the traditional learning situation in school (Jenson, 1963; John, 1963). In addition, they may suffer from undernourishment or lack of sleep. They may become inattentive, disturbingly aggressive, or ominously withdrawn (McKee and Leader, 1955). Their absentee rate is probably high.

This generalization, however, suffers the drawback of all generalizations--it is just that and nothing more. It points with accuracy to no individual case. Some children of poverty have learned to read easily despite economic deprivation; some economically middle-class homes are as barren of cultural advantages as the poorest (Gordon, 1965). Middle-class parents, whose anxiety about their child's progress in school takes the form of reproach rather than encouragement, may contribute as much to their child's reading problems as lower-class parents who were dropouts and whose hostility or lack of sympathy toward school is reflected in their child's attitude. More lower-class parents than middle-class parents, perhaps, are seriously concerned about their child's progress in school (Riessman, 1962, p. 11), but some may put more emphasis on being "good" and staying out of feelings about education and the public school and her interpretation of her own role in the learning process are clearly related to the child's motivation and achievement.

Programs That Point the Way

The research on home environment emphasizes its undeniable importance, even though much of the research has tended to be speculative and much has been based on relatively small and unrepresentative samples. Overall, the evidence tells us that there is a correlation between certain home conditions and poor adjustment in school (Gordon, p. 385). It does not pinpoint a necessarily casual relationship. It does not indicate a single course of remediation. However, certain gains made in recent years do imply significant approaches to the problem. It is important that a few systematic studies of compensatory programs have shown that combined environmental and educational intervention have been accompanied by improved functioning for large numbers of children (Gordon and Wilkerson, 1967, p. 27). The fact that even a six-week enrichment program, coupled with a series of informational and supportive conferences with parents, raised both the intelligence and reading readiness scores of a group of Tennessee Negro children to national norms is significant.

INSERT PHOTO # 4 FOLLOWING FIRST PARAGRAPH.

Four principals involved in a New York City program in which parents were used as reading assistants found a common meeting ground for professionals and parents to attack the reading problem. The principals believe that when the school ceases to be regarded by the parents as a "foreign enclave" in their midst and when it becomes "their schools," they then will be able to help their children.

Motivation may well prove one of the most promising areas to emphasize. Programs involving teachers, parents, and children, and using a wide variety of motivational schemes have been found to have a threefold effect. They have raised the level of expectation on the part of the teachers; have greatly increased parent-participation both in the school and in the home-learning situation; and have helped youngsters find success in learning. The fact that some programs have resulted in no demonstrable change may simply mean that the effort did apply to the crucial factors or that combinations of services were inappropriate or were applied in insufficient concentration. The ones that seem to work are the ones that seem to count.

CHAPTER II SOME PROMISING PROGRAMS TO OVERCOME ENVIRONMENTAL DEFICIENCIES--

A Background for Meaningful Action

The Problem of Finding Causes and Cures

Blame for reading failure has shifted subtly in the past few years. There was a time, within the memory of most administrators, when a child's failure to respond to education was looked upon by the schools and by the parents as the child's failure. That time is past, particularly in the big cities. Now the parents say that, if the child does not learn, something is wrong with the school. Both its content and its process are failing to get to the child. In many ways, parents are using the child's ability to read as their chief criterian in evaluating the school. If their child does not learn to read, then something is wrong with the whole system.

Educators tend to agree, but with another interpretation. Education journals reiterate that the schools should be able to take any child, from whatever background and with whatever equipment, start with him as he is and educate him to the full extent of his potential ability.

The Principal's Wide Search for Solutions

With the burden of performance shifted to the schools, the search for solutions to learning difficulties has widened. Despite the fact that schools are not responsible for the environmental factors that inhibit the development of reading skill, there is tacit acceptance that they must overcome them, perhaps even before getting on with their traditional job of formal education. The responsibility for meaningful action necessarily becomes that of the principal. The introduction of emphasis on federal cooperation and financial aid to help those least able to learn in traditional ways has caused the school administrator to cast his nets wider, out into the community and into the homes. A few examples will indicate the extensive range of these efforts.

In Sumter, South Carolina, a Pre-Primary Project for children of ages three to five is designed to involve parents, staff, and community agencies. The objectives is to head off crises before they occur. A pre-school checkup is administered by a psychologist who observes and tests the child while his parents are simultaneously interviewed by a social worker. Team members summarize their impressions and later each child's record with a consultant groups made up of a Project staff member, a local pediatrician, and a child psychiatrist. Parents of children with dependency or immaturity problems are offered immediate family counseling and concrete plans for achieving maturity and independence in the child before he enters school. Children who lack adaptive skills are offered six weeks' pre-education even before Head Start. Children with severe problems are referred to psychiatrists. The Project staff makes use of all the community's resources and help to instigate church programs, neighborhood play groups, family outings, pooled efforts by parents, and the development of new city recreation programs especially aimed at the pre-school disadvantaged child.

In Anniston, Alabama, a new curriculum has been disigned to permit students to progress at their own rate. When the project is in full operation, there will be a nongraded program of year-round education for children aged three to nineteen. Planning of the extensive curriculum to ensure a sequential course of study geared to individual differences includes the students themselves. The program encompasses day care and Neighborhood Youth Corps programs, Head Start classes, after-school personalized programs for dropouts, and adult literacy training, as well as the formal school curriculum.

Across the nation from Kirkland, New Mexico, to Cedar Falls, Iowa, to Ypsilanti, Michigan, teachers, social workers and paraprofessionals are being used in a variety of ways--as team teachers, teachers' aides, community aides, home visitors, and guidance counselors--to overcome environmental factors and to individualize instruction.

Picking a Pattern for Success

The school administrator, then, can consider a number and variety of ideas that will alleviate the reading problems of the children in his charge. Next comes the problem of deciding which of the many ideas meet the needs of the children, are within the capabilities of his staff, and lie within the framework of financial reason.

Some patterns do emerge which indicate the direction in which most schools are moving in order to overcome environmental drawbacks.

Current efforts tend to concentrate on the pre-school and elementary child. This is not to say that remedial efforts with older children are being abandoned, but the long view seems to suggest that early, concentration will not only compensate for environmental deficiencies but also obviate the necessity for later remediation.

Another significant pattern involves emphasis on individual instruction. The existence of staffing problems complicate achievement of individual attention, making it possible only with the more extensive use of paraprofessional help, better regrouping of professionals, and more serious attention to in-service training.

Most of the newer programs stress the involvement of the parents and the communities. Without the understanding and support of the forces outside of the school, much of what is undertaken within the school walls can disappear when the afternoon school bell rings.

The most effective programs are geared to the unique needs of the children and the communities in which they live. Any generalization about the kinds of curricular and extracurricular efforts needed for the children in any specific community can be only half right. The principal who knows his teachers, his children, his parents, and his community is in a much better position to determine the kind of effort needed in his school. He may find ideas in other places, but the patterns he evolves have to be cut from his cloth to fit his clientel

All these patterns overlap. None is exclusive, as the following examples of programs that show promise indicate. Their division into categories is only a device to serve as a guideline to the reader.

Individualized Instruction: Nongraded Classrooms

Pittsburgh has what is perhaps the nation's first successful operation of an individualized instruction operation on a systematic, step-by-step basis throughout an entire school program. Individually Prescribed Instruction stimulates the pupils to work on their own. A combined second- and third-grade reading class of 63 pupils, for example, uses a learning center and two adjoining rooms. Two teachers and the school librarian act as coordinators and tutors, while the pupils proceed with the various materials prepared by the school's teachers and IPI's developer, the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. In the program, each pupil sets his own pace. When he completes a unit of work, he is tested immediately. If he gets a grade of 85 per cent or better, he moves on. If not, the teacher offers a series of alternative activities to correct his weaknesses, including special individual tutoring. There are no textbooks. Virtually no lecturing to a class as a whole is done. An indication of success is the Oakleaf elementary school which has the highest percentage of attendance in Allegheny County and one of the highest in the country. Many students have performed from three to four grade levels above those which normally would be expected at their age.

Troy, Alabama, has a nongraded communicative arts program at the Charles Henderson High School which has replaced the traditional program with five phases of learning in which pupils are grouped on the basis of standardized reading test scores. The 400 students who take part can, upon demonstrated achievement, move from group to group at six-week intervals. Instruction is highly individualized and ranges from remedial reading work to college credit courses.

Portsmouth, Virginia, has had ungraded classes for retarded readers since 1956. The success of its program, and how it achieved it, is dealt with among the case histories at the end of this chapter.

A variation of the individualized instruction plan is used in Las Vegas, Nevada, where students spend from one to two-and-one-half hours a day in self-directed study at a resource center, the library, or an open laboratory.

Individualized Instruction: Adding More "Teachers"

In Cedar Falls, Iowa, as in many other cities, three teachers are assigned to two classes. The extra teacher , who may be either full time or part time, forms a groups of the pupils from both classes who are having the greatest difficulty with reading and provides this group with intensive help on reading deficiencies.

In Ethete, Wyoming, two kindergaren teachers operate as a team and devote full time to teaching while teacher helpers assume the clerical duties. A half-time teacher's aide is available for every classroom through the fourth grade. A lower pupil-staff ratio through the use of auxiliary personnel now permits concentration on reading programs with a student body that is 85 per cent American Indian.

The shortage of teachers for reading programs is causing school systems to look to their lists of retired teachers. In Detroit, for instance, more than thirty retired teachers have come back into the schools for two days a week to conduct all-day remedial classes.

The use of tutors and auxiliary personnel is varied. In many places, the National Teacher Corps interns work with classroom teachers in efforts to reduce class size, in helping on field trips, and in making home visits. Principals should investigate the possibility of participating in this program.

Princeton, Minnesota, uses six part time tutors and 150 Future Teachers of America to assist the regular teaching staff. Again, the object of the program is to increase adult contact and give more individualized instruction.

(Reducing class size, of course, is a major effort everywhere. However, much money is entailed in reducing a class average, even from 30 to 27 pupils, and there is no conclusive evidence that better learning takes place.)

Northeastern University, under a Ford Foundation grant, is sending teacher interns as tutors to help junior and senior high school students from Boston and Revere to read more efficiently and critically. Thus far, the experiment shows an average seven-months' gain in vocabulary and comprehension during the thirteen-week course.

In New York City, ten-year-olds are tutoring seven-year-olds. It is part of a Hunter College tutoring program involving thirty of the College's prospective teachers and sixty-two fifth- and sixth-graders from PS 158. The college juniors tutor the youngsters who, in turn, tutor second- and third-graders. The fifth- and sixth-graders get help with their own learning problems from the college students, then reinforce what they learn by helping younger children who have similar difficulties. An unlooked-for advantage is that the older students have gained new respect for themselves and for their classroom teachers.

Various kinds of aides are much a part of the picture in attacking the problems of reading. Many urban school systems are using aides to visit the homes of children, newly moved into the district, who are retarded in reading. Some schools have half-step grades for these children so that an ostensible second-grader, for example, can get intensive help before stepping into the "real" second grade. The aide who visitis the home discusses the schools' program with the mothers, and often in her own dialect or language and explains that her child is not being held back but is getting extra help.

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In Garden Grove, California, teacher aides follow junior high remedial reading students into their social studies and science classes where they tape the lessons and work later with the students, going over the recorded lesson as well as written material. This method helps students with the heavy vocabulary loads in those subjects.

The National School Volunteer Program is well known. It began in New York City and has spread to most of the major cities. Women volunteers are assigned to one school for at least three half-days a week during the school year, to serve as individual tutors. Although the School Volunteers have no figures to show reading improvement, administrators have had loud praise for their efforts. Besides giving the children individual, undivided attention, these tutors are able to discover little situations that can be of great help to the classroom teacher. For instance, simply finding out that a little girl of eight stays up half the night watching the late show can explain her lack of attention in class and lead to some efforts to convince her mother of the value of sleep.

Teacher Improvement -- In-Service Training.

Probably the most neglected technique for attacking reading problems is in-service training for teachers. Principals who have used in-service training have found it most effective when it has been concentrated in two areas: 1) helping teachers change their attitudes toward children with learning deficiencies so that they will have a higher expectation for them, and 2) helping teachers gain the tools and techniques that lead to success with these students. Without the second, the first stands to lose by default.

In many districts there is no systematic way for teachers to become familiar with better methods of new materials. Regional centers help by providing a locale which teachers can visit in order to see what is new and available, as do demonstration projects on college campuses or in the larger cities, but the ordinary busy classroom teacher usually has no opportunity to visit such projects. The principal sometimes can provide this opportunity.

Much--probably too much--of what teacher know about new materials for the classroom is learned from the textbook and equipment salesmen who, quite naturally, represent one product and one point of view.

Creating New Materials

Disenchantment with available materials for the hard-to-teach beginning student has resulted in many do-it-yourself products, some of which have since become commercially available. One such group of materials came from Central, New Mexico, where the school staff prepared a series of preprimers and readers for Navajo children. Stories and legends from the Navajo parents were translated and edited for the children. All of the illustrations were done by Navajo artists. The content correlates with the environment and experiences of the children. Cost per child, under a Title I project, was between $10 and $15. The Detroit school system also came up with stories with which the Negro urban child could identify.

Not all principals can use such a localized approach, but those who can should be ready to provide guidance.

Extending the School Year

There is nothing new about summer school, but often it offers a principal the chance to be innovative in working against environmental deficiencies.

In Chicago, special summer schools devote 40 per cent of the teaching day to the language arts, and much of what is learned during those summer months is finding its way back into the formal classrooms in the fall. Head Start itself began as a summer venture and, in many places, has been incorporated into the regular school year. The availability of college students during the summer has involved them in many tutoring projects across the nation, particularly in the urban centers.

Sometimes fresh ideas spring from summer projects. In St. Louis, for instance, students in 76 classrooms are encouraged to read by giving them books as prizes. To get his first book, a student need only show that he has a public library card. Then he can earn up to nine books, gettong one for every two he reads outside of class. The program cost only $4,000 to initiate, and the State Education Department provided the money under Title I funding for library books. So many of the pupils earned the maximum number of books, however, that the schools were compelled to seek more money from the state. The parents also became involved. More than one father built a bookshelf for his child, sometimes the first bookshelf the home had known. Some mothers, for the first time, got library cards for themselves. Among the students, many poor readers became avid readers. Homes with books encourage reading. Like so many ideas, the St. Louis one grew out of a summer project.

Drawing in the Community

There is nothing new about the need to draw in the community so that it will be aware of the schools' problems and will lend the necessary support when occasions demand. What is new in the equation for many school principals is a broader definition of the community. Jaking a luncheon address to the local men's club or explaining a change in curriculum to the school PTA does not reach the members of the community who hold themselves apart from the schools. Many mothers, for instance, think of a visit to the school only in terms of trouble. Ordinarily, they have been summoned to hear the worst about their children's progress or behavior.

Today, removing the barriers of strangeness and fear is part of the school principal's job. Ways of accomplishing that range from simple ideas to elaborate plans for better school-community relations.

A Detroit junior high school principal, for instance, cleared out a room and furnished it with comfortable chairs and a large coffee pot. Then he let it be known that the parents, mostly white Appalachian in-migrants, were welcome. One by one and two by two they began to come, bringing with them their pre-school children. The principal takes no advantage of this captive audience; in fact, unless invited, he never goes near their room. But the mothers are gradually losing their fear of the school and are taking opportunities during their visits to talk with the teachers and the principal.

Mothers who have been hired as teachers' aides or teaching assistants turn out to be links with the community. They speak the language or dialect of the community and, whereas their friends might be afraid or unwilling or embarrassed to ask questions about the school of the teachers or principal, they have no such misgivings about questioning the aides. Knowing that interaction takes place challenges the schools to make sure the aides know what is going on and understand any curricular changes that are being instituted.

In the Two Bridges area of New York City, between Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges on the lower East Side, twenty-one mothers have been hired as reading assistants for four hours a day, five days a week. There were enormous problems of process and role identification which are vividly described in a report prepared by the Bank Street College of Education (see appendix). The first program was under a Title II grant but the parents thought it was important for the Board of Education to show its faith by underwriting the program, which it did when it granted $40,000 for the 1966-67 school year. In general, the project achieved what it set out to do: not only to help children retarded in reading catch up, but to catch up with the best in the class. The intangible benefits of giving the children individual attention, helping their self-image by seeing one of their own kind on the staff in a respected position, providing twenty-one new links with an impoverished area

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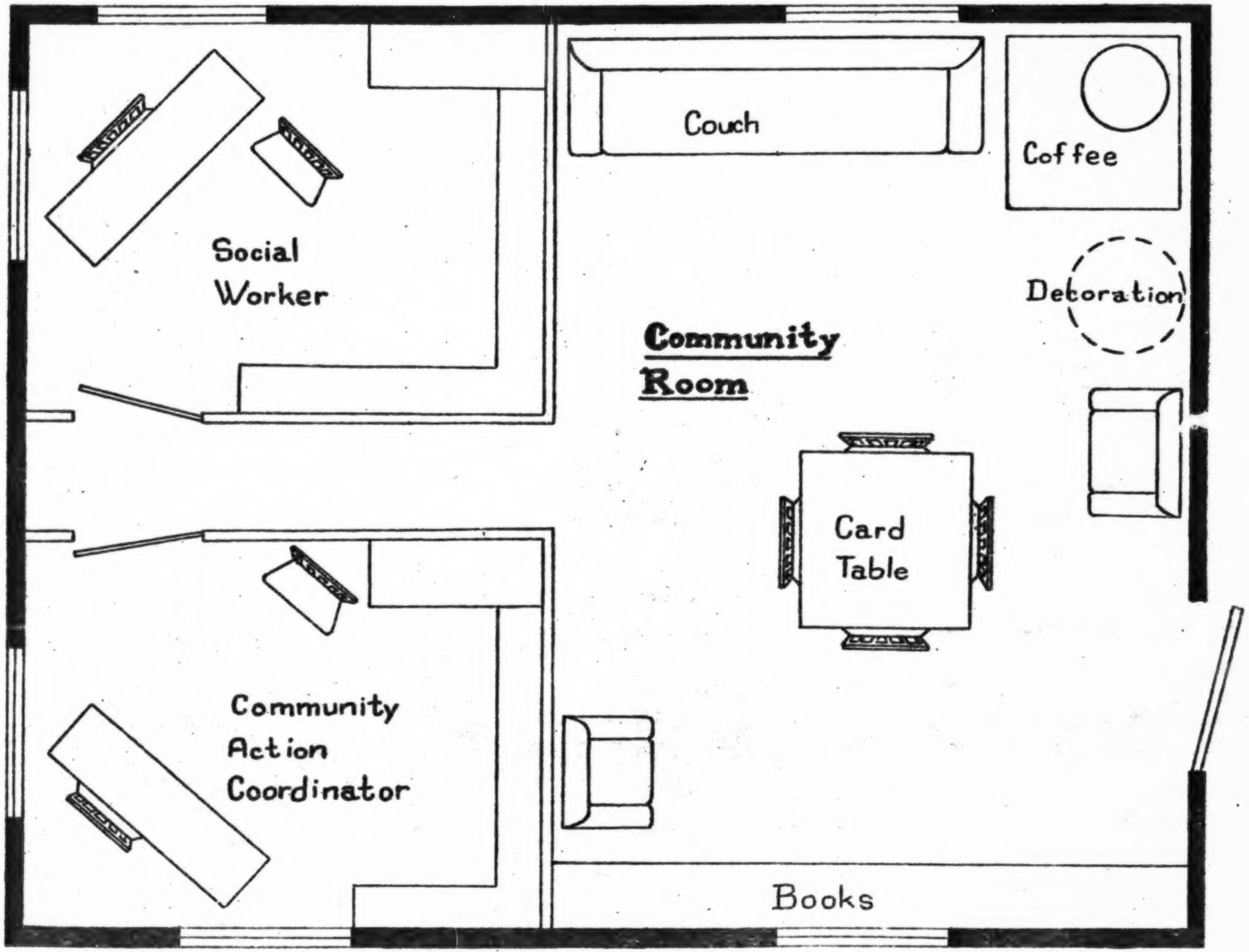
Couch
Coffee
Social
Worker
Decoration
Community
Room
Card
Table
Community
Action
Coordinator
Books

of the city, and demonstrating that undereducated parents can help solve one of the schools' major problems actually proved as vital as the help that was given the children on reading. The Two Bridges reading assistants received one week of training and then continual observation and in-service training throughout the year, although the latter was rather hit-or-miss, depending on the available time of the training supervisor and the teachers to when the assistants were assigned.

One interesting aspect of the Two Gridges project is that the principals, who were enthusiastic, were swamped with volunteer full-time teachers who wanted to take part in the experiment. The principals who were lukewarm or skeptical had to assign unwilling teachers to work with the mothers. The attitude of the administrator, obviously, sifts down through the ranks and affects the success of using nonprofessional personnel in the schools.

The benefit of tutors who come from the neighborhood involves more than individual attention to slow readers. Reticent children usually show no reluctance to speak up when the tutor or other auxiliary worker is one who lives in the child's own neighborhood and is neither strange nor threatening. She can help the child in adjusting to the unfamiliar world of the school or in interpreting some aspects of his behavior to the teacher.

One negative reaction to the use of tutors stems from the fact that they too often work in isolation from the actual classroom teacher. There is a tendency for the tutor and the teacher never to cross paths or to discuss the specific progress or needs of the individual children. Administrators could prevent such lack of communication by freeing the classroom teacher for conferences with the tutor.

Many school systems are sending teachers out to work with both pre-school and school-age children in the home setting. Actual lessons are taught, with the mothers and brothers and sisters watching and sometimes taking part. The hope is that the mothers will thereby better understand what the schools are trying to do and also observe and amulate some of the teaching methods.

In Ypsilanti, Michigan, for example, teachers try to involve mothers in the education of their children by showing processes through at-home tutoring. Mothers are also invited to go along on field trips and take part in monthly discussion groups for both fathers and mothers. Early returns show that children who have been involved in the Ypsilanti program outdistance the non-participating children in achievement, school motivation, attendance, and relationship with adults.

In Riverton, Wyoming, a part-time social worker familiarizes parents with school learning projects and also supervises a student-to-pupil tutoring program in which junior high school students help elementary school pupils.

In San Francisco, the appointment of a school-community teacher has alleviated many problems. The teacher acts as a liaison between the school and the parent, showing how the parent can help the child to study and read more effectively and how certain discipline problems can be eased with the help of the home.

Los Angeles also has special school-community workers whose job it is to welcome new families to the school district and to help orient them to the school program. Los Angeles is also doubling the class time allotted to teaching reading and has planned a series of 100 parents' classes to show them how to assist their children in learning to read.

Riverside, California, produced a color movie of a Title I remedial reading program in order to inform parents and the general public.

Kansas City, Missouri, encouraged community participation by turning an elementary school auditorium into a first-class professional theatre with a professional director and local theatre group putting on plays for the children. Vocabulary and reading activities accompany each performance.

The tradition of field trips is especially important for the ghetto

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child who may never have been more than a few blocks from home, and they also serve to draw in the parent. Often parents not only accompany the children but are included in the planning. In St. Louis a direct appeal is made to parents. The principals invite the parents to school where their cooperation in helping the child learn to read is enlisted. They are told of the relationship between education and the kinds of jobs their children might be able to hold. This is reinforced by field trips where the children see people at work and begin to understand the relationship between what they do in school and what kind of lives they can lead.

Using the field trip as a widening experience, the skilled teacher can capitalize on it, both before and after, through discussions, experience charts, listing new words learned, map-making of the route covered, written reports, compositions, poems about the experience, thank-you notes to the hosts, and other activities that incorporate language arts skills.

Community libraries and museums are also entering into new forms of collaboration with the schools. Story hours, parent discussion groups, new materials to appeal to culturally deprived audiences, and more individualized attention to library users are all part of increased efforts. Museums are working closely with classroom teachers to provide the kind of enrichment materials, including kits for classroom use from the museum that will stimulate learning.

Sometimes the best way to encourage parental interest in education is to offer education itself to the parents. Adult education courses, ranging from basic literacy training through all kinds of formal courses, are being offered nearly everywhere.

The problems of good school-community relations, particularly in the ghetto districts of the large cities, are enormous. However much anybody regrets it, there is a great gulf between the school staff and the parents.

Their lives and experiences and attitudes are so different that they cannot be changed by exhortation. The process of building mutual respect is slow, and some of the new parent groups are impatient. At the same time, some of the teachers feel threatened by the influx of indigent personnel and suspect that giving up any portion of their tasks is somehow denigrating their professionalism. The administrator's task is to smooth the relationship between professional and paraprofessional by providing for open communications and proper training for the aides.

There should also be open recognition of the possibility of rough seas when the neighborhood or community is invited into the schools. But without the support and understanding of the adults in the community, the effectiveness of what is offered the children can be obliterated..

The Necessity for Action

Part of the difficulty in selecting reading improvement methods is that many experiments have involved a variety of approaches, many of which were used simultaneously, so that it is hard to say what made the difference. Further, many things are being tried that seem to promise success from a common-sense point of view but are hard to evaluate. For example, some 14,200 children in 17 Cleveland inner-city elementary schools have been coming to school early in order to get a free breakfast. The purpose of the experiment is to find out if a well-nourished child from a poverty area will learn better. It will be hard, however, in the Cleveland experiment, to isolate this one element from all other efforts in order to measure its success.

It is equally hard to know for certain which program and techniques will accomplish the most in comparison to the expenditure. The longitudinal studies on the effects of early intervention now going on, for example, will not reveal their final evidence for several years, that is until the first children in the initial studies get into the upper grades.

No principal, however, should be willing to wait for the final word when common sense suggests that, the earlier a child can begin acquiring the equipment for learning, the more successful he is going to be in school. At least the directions that point toward success are clear. The advantage of an eclectic approach, adopting a variety of techniques and programs to serve within and without the school gates, is that it can be tailored to fit the particular community. The principal cannot sit by and wait for the final and ultimate panacea. He can, and must, act now, for progress in this, as in other areas, is inherently bound up with a trial-and-error approach.

Measurement and Evaluation of Reading Skills

It is wise for the principal to know some of the problems and techniques involved in measuring and evaluating reading performance. Such knowledge will enable him to see more clearly what programs will help youngsters do a better job in reading and what kind of assistance the classroom teacher or the reading specialist in his building needs.

Though specific causes of reading problems are not easy to isolate or identify, there are ways of measuring certain skills and of estimating whether or not a child is making satisfactory progress in those skills. The principal should think of the diagnosis of a reading problem as something that can be done on various levels--on a classroom teacher level, on a reading specialist level, or on a clinic level. Treatment for reading disability also can be carried out at a variety of levels. These levels indicate the professional training of an individual in test instruments and observation of reading skills for a diagnosis. The classroom teacher has the necessary training (provided he has received approximately six semester hours in reading instruction) to obsdrve the strengths and weaknesses of vocabulary, word recognition skills, and sentence and paragraph comprehension. There are formal, standardized group tests that isolate these specific reading skills and give some measure of a child's performance. Most group tests are translated into some kind of grade equivalent. With such information, classroom teachers can make an immediate adaptation of their methods and materials in order to build on the strengths and overcome the weaknesses that are exhibited. The classroom teacher can also use his own tests, that is, informal tests, in order to obtain a description of observable reading performance. Since other factors, such as emotional stability and personal self-esteem, play a role in the child's performance in the classroom, the teacher can make informal observations of the child's attitudes, his willingness to participate, and his articulation and speaking vocabulary.

Someone with more advanced training is ordinarily required to give a diagnosis of problems beyond those described above. A remedial reading teacher or a reading specialist, for example, looks for a more specific analysis of the process of reading. For instance, the process can be broken down and measured in such steps as 1) accurate reception of external stimuli, 2) perception, 3) association, 4) assimilation, 5) analysis, and 6) evaluation. Broader experience with tests and individual diagnostic procedures is necessary to detect deficiencies at this level and to formulate specific treatments to overcome the weaknesses. A remedial reading teacher or reading specialist usually operates at this level and judges the gap between a child's achievement and his ability.

When it is necessary to analyze a case beyond the observable strengths and deficiencies in reading performance and beyond a measurement of the process of reading, clinical personnel usually are needed. Individualized intelligence tests, such as the _Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children_, psychological projective tests, interviews, physiological evaluations, and social considerations are factors that are usually beyond the scope and means of the local

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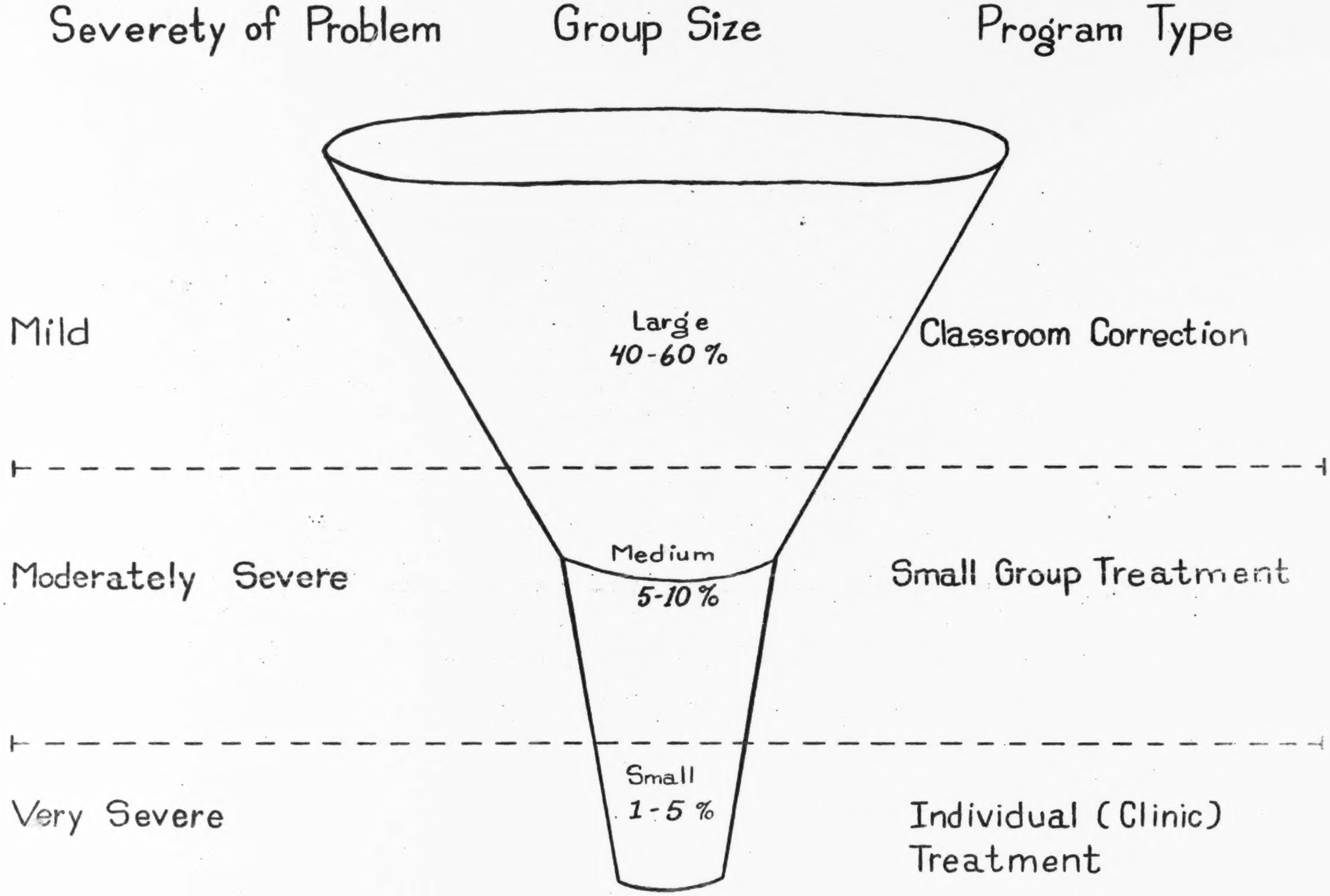
Severety of Problem
Group Size
Program Type
Mild
Large
40-60 %
Classroom Correction
Moderately Severe
Medium
5-10 %
Small Group Treatment
Very Severe
Small
1-5 %
Individual (Clinic)
Treatment

school, classroom teacher, and remedial reading teacher. Such factors can be handled by an interdisciplinary clinic.

Most teachers and remedial reading teachers use standardized group tests to determine the level of the child's performance in reading. Those teachers and the principal should be cautioned that the grade equivalent score noted on a group achievement test may be misleading. For one thing, that score probably indicates the frustration level of the child, that is, the best he can do when applying his utmost energy. It is not a level at which he would perform daily in the classroom and, therefore, is not his instructional level. Secondly, it must be remembered that a formal test measures a limited number of behaviors. People using the test must make sure that it is getting at the kind of reading behavior in which they are interested. This caution is more relevant at the end of some instructional programs than it is earlier, when merely the establishment of some general level of performance is being attempted. It would be unfair, for example, to measure the merits of an instructional program emphasizing word attack skills with a test comprised almost entirely of paragraphs with fact-comprehension questions following. More appropriate is the test focused primarily or specifically on the word attack skills that were taught in the instructional program.

It must also be mentioned that an evaluation of reading is not merely the measurement of a certain number of skills but is also concerned with the interests that have been created and the attitudes developed as part of a program. All these considerations merit the attention of a principal or a school in trying to determine what factors to include in a program designed to overcome environmental interferences with reading. A more detailed discussion of the measurement and evaluation of specific reading skills and the use of informal and formal tests can be found in the third book in this target series, Correcting Reading Difficulties--the Specialist's Role (Smith, Carter, and Dapper, International Reading Association, 1969).

Chapter III PROGRAMS THAT TRANSLATE THEORY INTO PRACTICAL ACTION

Several brief case histories of programs in action are cited here. They are chosen not necessarily as representing archtypes of what should be done, but simply presenting in greater detail the activity in some working school situations with all of the attendant strengths and limitations of personnel, finance, and clientele. The treatment of a few case histories in somewhat greater depth enables the principal to foresee some of the considerations involved when new programs are begun.

Detroit, Michigan

A number of plans to overcome environmental obstacles to learning are currently being tried in Detroit. Those presented here concern the combined use of reading coordinators and community agents and practical methods for involving the neighborhood in the school.

Detroit's success in the use of reading coordinators assigned to individual schools has led to a major increase in their number since the program began in 1959. They are enthusiastically endorsed by the principals, many of whom were unable to oversee their instructional programs as thoroughly as they would have wished because of the press of administrative duties. They are also supported by teachers who consider their help invaluable in the classroom and find it easier to discuss their teaching weaknesses with the coordinator than with the principal.

The coordinators' activities cover every phase of the school program as it affects or is affected by reading. As a result, for instance, the social science teacher in a school in which a record of the reading level of each class is now available for the first time changed his basic texts to meet more adequately the range of reading levels in his class. Teachers' attitudes have improved, according to at least one principal. They no longer give up on poor readers, believing that nothing can be done, but turn instead to the coordinator for help, advice, and appropriate materials.

The reading coordinator's job is just that--to coordinate all reading activities in the school. She is both the instructional aide to the principal and the teacher's right arm. Part of the task is to assess reading disabilities occuring in any areas or subjects, to consult with and advise teachers about remedies and appropriate materials, and to provide supplies. The coordinator also establishes liaison with parents, both individually and through PTA groups or community councils, explains reading problems, and suggests what parents can do to help. Although the reading coordinator may teach a few small groups of problem readers, teaching is not her main function. Her job differs from school to school, depending on the needs. In one school, for instance, she conducts a small class for exceptionally bright students, helping to scan faster and thus speed up approach to college reading.

By attending conferences and two in-training sessions each month, reading coordinators keep abreast of new materials and techniques, reporting back on new developments. Teachers, in turn, submit brief monthly reports on the reading progress of their classes to the coordinators, enabling them to place new pupils as appropriately as possible while they themselves become more acutely aware of the reading progress or lack of it in their own classes.

The reading coordinator usually is assigned a room of her own, although on occasion she may share quarters with a community agent, another newly created role whose function is to bring the school and community more closely together in a variety of ways. Teamwork between the two offers obvious advantages. During the school semester, the coordinator will help new teachers to adjust, demonstrate new materials, visit classes, review all material related to reading being used, and assess the reading level of each class and each new transfer pupil. She will help identify poor readers, suggesting remedies and materials for their use, and perhaps undertake a small class of those who need help.

She is allowed a budget to build up a library of supplementary materials, and some have set up "Reading Adventure Rooms," open before, during, and after school, where adults as well as children can borrow paperbacks with fewer restrictions about their return than most libraries demand. Expense money is allowed to permit the coordinators to attend conferences and workshops arranged by the central staff.

An administrator setting up a reading coordinator program will want to define the role as clearly as possible. Detroit held a three-week orientation session for the reading coordinators before the program began and carefully outlined their role at workshops for principals, who, in turn, outlined it at orientation sessions for their staffs. Although the role is consultative, one principal has found the coordinator is more effective if given a supervisory status, fully backed by the principal. What threat this held for the teachers diminished as the reading coordinator's helpfulness became evident. At the same time, it made the teacher's cooperation almost mandatory. Obviously, the job calls for many subtle relationships and depends on personality as much as skill. But it can be as far reaching as the principal and coordinator care to make it.

The principal of an elementary school, located near the scene of the 1967 riot in Detroit, readily admits he is not an expert on the environment that surrounds his school. Indeed, his home is forty miles away. But he is making every effort to bring the school to the community and the community to the school. Although his school starts with pre-kindergarten and goes to the seventh grade, his programs involve three-year-olds to eighty-year-olds.

The pre-kindergarten classes are relatively new. For a time it seemed there simply was no space for them until the principal hit on the happy idea of lopping off part of the gymnasium to make room. The nursery school classes concentrate on reading readiness. One novel aspect of the program is that parents must come once a week or forfeit their child's place in the class.

The principal works closely with his community agents, and, on the advice of this agent, a Drop-In-Room for Drop-Outs was set up. This room provided space for lounging about, playing ping-pong, and browsing, if they cared to, through magazines and books. The room is open from 3:30 to 10:00 p.m., and the only limitation is age--14 to 25. Approximately fifty have taken advantage of the plan, a number of them Black Muslims. Several have become teachers' aides, including three young unmarried mothers.

A Community Room for adults, supervised by Vista Volunteers, attracts many old-timers from the neighborhood. Coffee and conversation are the drawing cards.

When the community agent helped organize a Community Council, with various committees on housing, sanitation, education, etc., the man elected chairman of the education committee was the school custodian, a long-time member of the neighborhood.

The principal's support of both his community agent and his reading coordinator, whom he has placed in a supervisory rather than merely consultative role, has paid dividends. For the first time in twelve years, the schools' primary class measured up to .002 per cent of the national average, an encouraging improvement. How much weight should be given to each factor in the changes the principal has made, he finds impossible to assess, but the fact of significant change is there.

Portsmouth, Virginia

Portsmouth, Virginia, provides a good example of the thoughtfull planning and preparation behind the successful use of nongraded classes for poor readers .

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The aim of the nongraded classes, of course, is to provide more individualized instruction as a way of overcoming environmental obstacles to reading. It also eliminates the unrealistic pressures that stem from a program in which all six-year-olds are expected to do first-grade work and all eight-year-olds to do third-grade work. A child is treated as a learner rather than as a member of an age group. The example of Portsmouth illustrates the beneficial side effects such an approach can have.

Portsmouth began its program of ungraded classes for the "educationally retarded" in 1956, just after the school system had reorganized to include junior high schools, and the problem of placing 14-year-olds not yet ready to do junior high school work, but to old to remain in elementary school, became acute. Reading, of course, was one of their major stumbling blocks.

The success of the initial program--some 80 per cent of the students in the original ungraded classes moved into regular classes, and half of them graduated--prompted the extension of the program downward through the elementary grades to take in the child capable of catching up sooner.

Many children who had known only failure before have now experienced success. Some have joined in extracurricular activities for the first time. Their self-image has improved; the absentee rate has dropped; and discipline, once a problem, is far better. Their scores on reading tests also have improved, sometimes dramatically. A number have been able to make up two years in one.

The regular classes, no longer held back by slow readers, have benefited too. It is significant that, while the median I.Q. of the school population has dropped six points since the program began, the reading level has been maintained.

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Teachers also have profited. In the ungraded classes they have become more expert at diagnosing individual learning problems, As a consequence, the children have gained a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. Parents, brought in from the beginning, have responded with approval and have shown greater interest as they see their children progress. Their fear of stigma attached to children in the nongraded classes has given way to pride in accomplishment.

From a small beginning, the program has grown so that nearly 20 per cent of the system's elementary classes are now upgraded, not all of them in economically deprived areas. The success of the program in the lower grades has made it possible to cut down the number needed in the junior high schools. So aware is the assistant superintendent in charge of instruction of its educational benefits that he would like to see the program extended to all classes, for quick as well as slow learners.

The Portsmouth program evidences that the ungraded classroom is both corrective and developmental. Its aim is to take the child, regardless of age or grade level, and move him along at his own pace. Each class requires a daily plan of developmental activities tailored for each child, activities that he can pursue on his own, the plan frees the teacher to deal with individuals or small groups. The focus is primarily on the language arts--reading, writing, and speaking--and mathematics. Classrooms may contain children three or more years apart in age, and seven or more stages apart in reading achievement levels. "It's nothing new," Portsmouth's assistant superintendent has pointed out, "at least not to any teacher who has taught in a one-room schoolhouse."

Children are carefully screened before being enrolled in an ungraded class. The responsibility is primarily the teacher's, but the principal and general supervisor join in the final decision. Standardized intelligence and achievement tests are not relied on too much, since they may reflect frustration rather than capacity. Teacher evaluations, past performance, absenteeism, and physical and psychological tests weigh more heavily. The children accepted are those who are slow learners or educationally retarded (but not mentally retarded), and those with emotional or physical problems such as defects of sight, hearing, or speech, that interfere with learning. The school takes the initiative in explaining the program to the parents and seeking their cooperation. Home visits are made by the teacher.

After the initial screening, specially designed tests are given to determine to what extent physical impairment, social deprivation, emotional maladjustment, or intellectual limitation contribute to the child's slow development. The diagnosis, of course, is essential if the educational procedures that follow are to be individualized.

At the elementary level, the ungraded classes are divided into primary and intermediate classes--the primary class in place of grades one through three and the intermediate class in place of grades three through six. Class size is reduced from 30 to 25. Since the children capable of catching up are now noticed earlier, the few junior high ungraded classes that remain are mainly for slow learners only. They are pre-vocational, followed by an ungraded work-study program in senior high.

There are also pre-primary ungraded classes for children old enough to enter school but not yet for first-grade work. All beginning children are screened before the school term begins by a team of classroom teachers, general supervisors, psychologists, and visiting teachers at a Pre-School Readiness Evaluation Clinic and a Pre-School Medical Evaluation Clinic. If, after a year in the pre-primary class, a child is still not ready for regular class, he moves into the ungraded primary.

The pre-primary is structured, concentrating, among other things, on reading readiness--recognition of letters, letter sounds, and whole words at sight. Audio-visual equipment, recording tapes, and language kits are used. The primary and intermediate classes also concentrate, of course, on reading. Basal readers with which the children have not previously experienced failure are used, and a wide range of "high-interest, low-skill" supplementary reading material is available for use both in class and at home.

In a typical intermediate class, for example, four or five children may be sitting in a corner with the teacher, discussing points related to a story they are about to read. After reading it silently, they will discuss it again to test their comprehension. The other children are at work at their desks. Some are reading, some are writing, and some are doing math problems. A boy who can recognize words easily but has difficulty understanding them in context may be quietly drilling another whose word recognition is weak. The flashcards he uses are made especially for this activity by the teacher. "Plans for the ," which fill the blackboard, have been made out by the teacher and class together. "Spelling----Unit 20" is listed as a task for all children, but their separate books present Unit 20 at different levels. There are directions for the class in general and directions for certain children in particular. The atmosphere is cheerful, concentrated, and purposeful. The children look happy and secure.

Portsmouth attributes a good portion of its success to its careful screening procedure. Principals helping to set up the program in their schools became part of a team with the classroom teachers involved as well as the school nurse and other medical, psychological, or guidance personnel needed to screen prospective candidates for the ungraded class. Only such a broadly based team could help assess specific education remedies for the specific defects encountered, once the screening tests determinded the child's level, his difficulties or cluster of difficulties, whether social, intellectual, or emotional.

Title I grants helped Portsmouth expand its ungraded program--paid for new projectors, language kits, and other materials. Although most of the money has gone to teachers' salaries, a third of the classes are paid from the regular budget. Over a period of years, Portsmouth has been able to build up a supplementary library of "high-interest, low skill" readers at $2 to $3 a year per child. Far more such material is available today than when Portsmouth began its program.

Reducing class size for the ungraded classes did not prove a problem. Portsmouth found, for instance, that six regular classes of 30 children could be divided into one of 25 and five of 31. With the regular class far more evenly balanced than before, the addition of one extra child did not matter. The teachers would like to see the ungraded class reduced even further in size, however. Not every child really gets individualized instruction in a class of 25, though more do than before. Portsmouth will soon join Old Dominion College in a work-study program for its junior students, the future teachers working as aides in the ungraded classes. It will help to further individualized instruction and, in addition, help answer the need for more teachers experienced in ungraded class work.

Teachers have to do more daily planning for the ungraded class, although the reduced class size is a compensation. Portsmouth chose from among its best teachers for the ungraded classes and particularly sought those who had experience teaching more than one grade. Most had had experience teaching more than one level at one time, since regular classes already used tri-basal readers for slow, average, and superior students. In addition, the school system had prepared an extensive teachers' manual with suggested types of independent activities for children in the regular classes. Portsmouth has frequent in-service meetings for its ungraded teachers; they would like even more.

Meetings with parents require that teachers be sufficiently informed about the methods and aims of the program to explain it without giving rise to misunderstanding or fears that children will be held back. Teachers must be prepared also to encourage continued contact with the parents. Report cards, too are a consideration. Portsmouth uses an A-B-C system, followed by a numeral representing the grade level of work. The principal and teacher together determine the grade level of any child transferring to another school system.

Indianapolis, Indiana

There are many variations in the use of tutors, but one of the most closely structured programs, perhaps, is the one in Indianapolis. It illustrates both the advantages of a carefully planned program and the use of nonprofessionals drawn from the immediate neighborhood of the school.

Since it began, many Indianapolis children who were not expected to read at the end of the first grade are reading and reading well. Called "programmed tutoring" and scientifically designed, it is saving poor-risk first-graders from failure and turning them into average readers. It has been so successful that the Ford Foundation has given a grant to extend it to those children who seem to have the least chance for success.

The program uses neighborhood tutors with no special training for teaching except that given in the program itself. The use of non professionals not only saves money but the children respond to people who can speak their own language and understand their problems, perhaps first hand.

The difference between programed tutoring and the normal one-to-one tutoring is that programed tutoring carefully structures the behavior of the tutor who is told how to act and what to say. She follows precise written instructions in dealing with the children. In five steps, the tutor leads each child through his reading lesson, using the questions and directions that have been written for that specific lesson.

The first grader selected for the program reports daily to the tutor for about fifteen minutes. The tutor asks the child to read the regular lesson, and if the child responds correctly to a unit of work, a new unit is taken up immediately. Only when the child makes an error does the tutor follow the programed procedures. The student does not have to drill on elements he already knows.

Success is encouraged by frequent praise of the child's progress. The child knows that as long as he continues without interruption from the tutor, all is going well. Failures are not stressed and errors are not called to the child in a deliberate fashion. When the child makes an error, however, he is stopped and the problem is isolated for specific teaching.

Little space is required for the program. A small corner or a small room with one table and two chairs is all a tutor needs to function. Children report to the tutor at fifteen-minute intervals. When one finishes, he returns to the classroom and advises the next child to report to the tutor.

Indianapolis uses the programed tutoring approach primarily in disadvantaged area schools, selecting children from the bottom fifth of the first-grade classroom. School officials agree that the technique of programed tutoring does not have to be confined to disadvantaged areas nor to the first grade, but they find that the continual verbal reinforcement of the tutor and the continual stimuli of her questions are particularly beneficial for the disadvantaged child.

In setting up a similar program, principals would need to consider the following things:

1. The number of poor readers who could benefit from this kind of tutoring needs to be estimated in order to determine the number of tutors needed. A tutor can work with a maximum of fifteen children a week.

2. Tutors must be carefully trained in the use of the technique, with ample opportunity to see it demonstrated and to understand the principles of

reinforcement behind it. Indianapolis uses seven three-hour sessions for training its tutors.

3. Participating classroom teachers and administrators must be willing to accept the neighborhood tutor and to cooperate in making the necessary arrangements for efficient operation.

4. A minimum of space and materials is necessary for programed tutoring. However, with the tutor as a full-time employee, the program costs approximately $125 per child per year, including materials and supervision.

5. A member of the regular school faculty should be in charge of setting up the program and training the tutors. The principal may either take the responsibility himself or assign it to someone else. Programs involving more than one school, however, should be under the administrator in charge.

6. Although the technique is successful with students of average and above-average ability as well as below, the greater the ability of the student, the less gain is shown.*

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*Information on Programed Tutoring may be obtained from Dr. Douglas Ellson, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

CHAPTER IV THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL--A Guide to Action

Summing Up

Although there are many combinations of ways to overcome environmental obstacles to reading, one fact emerges clearly: Schools must take the lead in initiating change before improvement can come about. Factors producing change are many, varied, and intertwined. Neighborhoods can change in some areas, for instance, almost overnight. But the crucial factor in improvement is change initiated by the school principal.

As Henry Brickell, Associate Dean of Education, Indiana University, wrote: "The administrator mah promote--or prevent--innovation. He cannot stand aside or be ignored. He is powerful not because he has a monopoly on imagination, creativity, or interest in change--the opposite is common--but simply he has the authority to precipitate a decision. Authority is a critical element in innovation, because proposed changes generate mixed reactions which can prevent consensus among peers and result in stagnation."[*]

This does not mean that the principal should make sweeping changes as a private decision, imposing them as a fait accompli upon his staff, the children, and the community. The most effective innovations have been those that were mutually worked out by all concerned. But there has to be a point in effecting any change when one person gives the signal to start.

Since the interaction of the community, the home, and the school is directly related to reading problems, the first task of the principal is to get to know his community and neighborhood thoroughly in order to understand the specific environmental factors that may be contributing to reading difficulties.

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[*] Henry Brickell, "State Organization for Educational Change," Innovation in Education, edited by Matthew B. Miles, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1964, p. 503.

Neighborhood changes, particularly in the larger cities, may have made much of the principal's previous familiarity with a neighborhood woefully obsolete. What he hears through the organized, traditional channels, such as long-established clubs and PTA's, is probably only part of the story. It is the inarticulate, invisible, unrepresented parents and their children who are probably in the most desperate need for help. Reaching the hard-to-reach cannot be done through traditional channels. It requires new methods and a flexibility of high order. It also requires the assumption of new roles for the school and new roles for some of the staff.

Few principals are trying to do the job alone. Instead, they are trying to reach all the groups--parents, business, labor, welfare, church--that can help the schools discover how to be more effective. They are willing to air differences of opinion and willing to learn from outsiders. All of which is extremely easy to say and extremely difficult to do. In many cases, the principal will be dealing with people who have had none of the ordinary training experiences in group work or in leadership. Their lack of savoire faire includes ignorance about procedures of conducting a meeting or decision-making, even in small groups. They are often people who are uncomfortable in a school setting and embarrassed by their own grammatical errors or inarticulateness. Their uneasiness is often matched by the teaching staff who prefer the enjoyment of talking with others of similar background and experience. The principal's attitude, which is usually highly contagious, will determine to a great degree the attitude of his staff. It will also probably be read with surprising accuracy by the members of the community.

With all the necessity for drawing in the community, the principal must still focus his main attention on the school. He sets the tone, and whether the school becomes a learning center for teachers and administrators as well as children or something a great deal less depends on him. He could have the best community program in the nation, but if his teachers are not teaching as well as they might and his students are not learning, then the entire point is lost. The setting, the materials, the equipment, the personnel, and the atmosphere must all be the best that the principal can provide within the realistic limitations of time, budget, and space.

Given the magnitude and complexity of environmental effects on reading, it is possible that even a welo-conceived, well-planned, well-structured program might fail. But the principal has it within his power to reduce the possibility of failure and to enhance the possibility of success.

A Step-by-Step Approach to Change

The principal today is assuming more responsibility for the instructional integrity of his school, for creating the means whereby children can become effective learners, and for counteracting environmental deficits. But how does he proceed in a logical way? Here are some typical steps in establishing programs in reading:

Step 1--Survey the Needs Related to Reading

What factors in the neighborhood may interfere with the reading performance of some, or even all, of the children? For example, poor self-image, lack of language stimulation, nonstandard dialect, and negative attitude toward school and authority. Use study committees, questionnaires, and school records.

Step 2--Assess Resources

What people, facilities, money, and procedures can you use to act on the needs? For example, interested teachers and community groups, temporary buildings, contingency funds and federal grants, and participation in pilot programs.

Step 3--Consider Possible Solutions--Programs

What do research, demonstration programs, or common sense suggest as

FOLLOWING FIRST PARAGRAPH, INSERT "EXTENT OF READING DISABILITY."

Extent of Reading Disability

Severity of Disability and Symptoms	% of Students Involved*	Program Responsibility
I. Severe Reading Disability - may show evidence of physical, psychological or neurological interference - may display perceptual difficulties - may be classified as non-readers - usually require clinical treatment	1-5%	Central Administration (Clinic facility)
II. Moderately Severe Disability - read significantly below capacity level - lack basic reading skills - need remedial assistance outside the classroom	10-25%	Principal, Reading Specialist (Local school program)
III. Mild Disability - lack some reading skills and understandings - need individual help (for direction and practice) - can be treated in regular classroom	40-60%	Classroom teacher

* The percentage of students varies from one school system to another depending on the make-up of the school population. (Strang, 1968).

ways that will ease the reading problems associated with the environment? For ungraded classes, home-school teachers, family library programs, tutors, directed field trips, stimulating materials.

Step 4--Include the Community in Planning and in Execution

What groups or individual should help solve some of the reading problems? For example, PTA, local business associations, political pressure groups, professional associations, and interested parents. These people are important not only for generating good will, but also for selling the programs to the community and for finding resources to operate the proposed programs.

Step 5--Set Specific Objectives

What should the children (or adults) be able to do as a result of your program? For example, with a home-school coordinator program, the child and the parent should be able to conduct a simple reading and comprehension exercise after a visit from the coordinator. (Establishing specific objectives becomes important in "selling" the program to others and in evaluating its effectiveness.)

Step 6--Clarify Operational Procedures

Who are the people with responsibility and what are the rules for the programs? For example, publicize the leader of the program and the guidelines for its operation. A necessary condition is that the principal must give the program leader freedom to operate. Innovative programs, like innovative teachers, must be free to make mistakes or it is unlikely that anything exciting can happen.

Step 7--Submit a Proposal

If the program needs central approval for any reason, write a proposal that describes the first six steps and gives a budget.

Step 8--Evaluate the Program

Are the procedures being carried out? Have the objectives been realized to some degree? Be willing to evaluate in terms of the response of the teaching staff, the pupils, and the local community and use some format measures of achievement.

Cautions and Alternatives

Self-evident though it may be, it bears repeating that no one program can act as a solution to all reading problems or to reading problems that stem from the environment. Despite the millions of dollars that have gone into research and program development for overcoming environmental obstacles to learning, there are still no simple solutions. The wise principal, therefore, initiates as many thrusts against the problem as he can and encourages his staff to do the same. And, as each school year ends, he has to decide what is worth continuing, what needs changing, and what has to be abandoned.

The alternatives for change are many, and the diagram below may help visualize some of the possible combinations. Programs will aim at overcoming some of these needs: inadequate experience, inadequate language, negative attitude toward school and learning, lack of assistance at home, and poor sense of personal value. By drawing a wide variety of criss-crossing lines of influence among the elements in the three categories in the diagram, one can begin to see the different programs that could be developed to meet environmental needs.

THE SCHOOL AND THE ENVIRONMENT

School

Principal

Teachers

Aides

Pupils

Programs

Community liaison
Enrichment
Tutorial
Parental help
Language Department
Ungraded classes

Environment

Parents

Neighbors

Children

Neighborhood

PRECEEDING CAUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES, INSERT "COST OF SPECIAL READING PROGRAMS"

COST OF SPECIAL READING PROGRAMS

City	Description	Costs	Contact
Magdalena, N. M.	Summer program of cultural enrichment housed in mobile units. Impact on whole community's attitude toward school.	$120 per pupil for 70 pupils	J. Buck Doran, Sup't. Magdalena Municipal Board of Education Box 24 Magdalena, N. M. 87825
Portsmouth, Virginia	Ungraded program for educationally retarded at all grade levels in 7 target schools. Reduction of class size to 20-25. Figures include setting up a new kindergarten program.	$876,000 $275 per pupil (1326 ungraded 618 kindergarten)	Luther C. McRae Assistant Supt. of Schools Portsmouth Public Schools Municipal Building P. O. Box 998 Portsmouth, Virginia
Riverton, Wyoming	School social worker, in charge of student-to-pupil tutoring project. 35 students involved.	$4,306	James H. Moore Superintendent of Schools Riverton, Wyoming 82501

The principal can initiate programs that focus on a liaison between the school and the home or the neighborhood. His responsibility then is to see that the parents, teachers, pupils, and related school personnel get together to discuss satisfactory learning experiences and habits for the children. If he decides to set up an enrichment program to broaden the experiences of the children and to prepare them to read the content of their books, he may want to inform the parents and make use of parents and neighbors to help supervise the field trips or the social gatherings that become part of the enrichment experiences, and, of course, create working groups among the parents and community and teachers and their aides. Any kind of tutorial program that attempts to stimulate individual children by giving them a chance to perform for an individual tutor not only demands a supply of tutors but also an organization for handling the meeting of the student and the tutor and facilities and materials for them to work with. As was mentioned in a previous chapter, it is sometimes available to get the parents to contribute some assistance to the school in order to give their children better reading experiences. Not infrequently, volunteers from the Parent-Teacher Association will man a library or will become library assistants and take books from the library to the classrooms where they may also be employed to teach some stories to the children. Language development, especially for the disadvantaged children, has been identified as a valuable and sometimes essential goal. The use of tape recordings and readings, along with correlated discussions, demands the necessary equipment for the children to listen and respond to correct language patterns. It also demands that a curriculum be written. Tapes and records must be purchased so that the curriculum can be recorded and the children can learn more readily. Any attempt at nongraded classes at the primary and intermediate level, or at any level, requires considerable effort on the part of the principal to get

PHOTO #2 RELATES TO LATTER PART OF PARAGRAPH his teachers prepared for this task and to bring in appropriate outside speakers for ideas and workshops. It is also necessary to inform the community and the children of the advantages of the program, pointing out the emphasis on the individual which enables him to receive a greater sense of self-esteem. This comes through elimination of unfair competition or unfair comparisons which can result when classes are grouped according to grades or a single age year.

Probably the greatest error made by principals and administrators is the lack of specific objectives in setting up and developing a program to improve reading. Certainly, it is not enough simply to establish as an objective "the improvement of reading" or the "raising of a reading performance score on a standardized test." The objectives of a program should be related to improving self-image or motivation, if that seems to be causing poor performance in reading. Other objectives should include providing more opportunity to interact with an adult or broadcasting experiences to prepare them to understand and discuss concepts that appear in their readers. Furthermore, objectives should be written in terms of the kinds of performance expected from the children after they have gone through the program. Probably the second most frequent fault in establishing new reading programs is the lack of support. It is a fairly simple task to give a body of teachers the freedom to engage in a new program or activity, but that new program will demand materials, in service training, facilities, and perhaps administrative guidance and encouragement before it can operate efficiently and effectively.

Somehow the school and the environment must be linked with programs that will help children learn to read--the basic skill for survival in the twentieth century. A simple worksheet similar to the one presented below may help the principal and his reading teachers to decide how to proceed in their school.

PROGRAM WORK SHEET

Needs and Objectives	Possible Programs	Personnel	Facilities
adult contact	tutorial	paid housewives volunteer college students	rooms
common experiences	enrichment		
poor vocabulary	listening posts		
self-image	ungraded		
motivation	parental involvement		

Increasingly, the principal is spoken of as the chief instructional officer of his school. This implies that he has the responsibility and the authority to make instruction viable or to let it wither and wane. School administrators these days have no easy task. Not only are parents and community representatives becoming more vociferous in their demand for improved instruction, but teachers are also clamoring for better working conditions and better pay. For that reason, the principal may seek ways of promoting instructional excellence that do not require his constant attention and supervision. He may consider a consulting teacher as a liaison to visit classrooms and encourage reading improvement, working with the teachers to develop better instructional programs for reading improvement.

FOLLOWING LAST PARAGRAPH, INSERT "STEPS FOR STARTING A SCHOOL READING PROGRAM"

Steps for Starting a School Reading Program

Steps	Purpose	Uses
1. All pupil survey Reading achievement test	-Points out children who need help of some kind	-Screening device -Show need for remedial help
2. Capacity measure Intelligence test	-Shows ability of individual students	-Screening device -Establish priorities for remediation
3. Specific diagnostic testing Diagnostic reading test	-Shows strengths, weaknesses of disabled readers	-Basis for remedial instruction -Establish priorities for remediation

It should be evident from this book that environmental causes and locally sponsored programs to overcome environment are not the only reading program considerations. Naturally, the principal has a broad view of reading instruction and knows the routine for getting diagnoses from classroom teachers, from remedial reading teachers, and from clinics. Still it is undeviably true that no one is in a better position to know about the local environment than the school principal. Therefore, this book has laid directly on his shoulders the responsibility of finding ways to overcome environmental interference with good performance in reading.

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